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THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.  
BY LOUISE SCHLEPKERN.

A pilgrim and a stranger,  
I journey on my way;  
I seek through tribulation  
The light of perfect day;

Through thickest gloom and darkness

I find a bright star,

It shines ever upward—

The bright and morning star.

My bosom never fails me,  
Though lone and drear the night;

Though clouds around me darken;

They cannot hide its light;

Courage, I see day is dawning,

For I am a pilgrim,

In all its radiant beauty,

The bright and morning star.

It guides me to the city  
With twin foundations fair,

Whose wall is pearl paper,

And set with jewels rare.

A grand untempled city,

Revealed to me,

Whose gates of pearl are numbered,

And streets are paved with gold.

Though oft my feet are weary,  
So long and round the road,

One step more, my patient load,

To share my heavy load.

My faith can never fail me,

The while I see afar,

In all its radiant beauty,

The bright and morning star.

## A WOMAN'S VOW.

BY MARY E. WOODSON.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE HIDDEN HAND.

Sebastian Alvarez, the spoiled darling of the haut ton, at Berlin, dreamed away his existence in one unbroken round of pleasure. Masked balls and operas exhibited him as the handsomest knight amongst a hundred competitors. And court beauties smiled upon him in undignified admiration as he moved, a born Adonis, through their ranks.

The accepted lover of a noble and beautiful lady, he could afford to smile haughtily down upon his rivals in the lists, and the young Spaniard's pride of birth was scarcely equal to his pride of bearing. He had but one ungratified wish at heart, and that was to induce his father to join him here. His love for his beautiful sister bordered upon idolatry, and he longed to introduce her into circles where she was so well qualified to shine, and where, in consequence, they might give and borrow lustre from each other.

The first rude awakening came to him in a double letter from father and sister, informing him of the betrothal of the latter to Earl Templeton.

"My father has surely gone mad," he muttered with a suppressed exclamation that sounded very much like an oath. "What would my beautiful Olave say to this untitled Englishman for a brother-in-law? The fellow, it is true, comes of that Devonshire Templeton stock, who trace their ancestry, with vanishing pride, back to those vulgar, beef-eating Saxons in the days of the Conqueror; but between him and the cardinals there stand, we may wager, a hundred more direct claimants in their counsels, he urged that the affair at home might be hushed at once; and that his father and sister should join him without delay, at Berlin.

Having mailed the letter, and determined to wait at least until he should receive a response, he dismissed the subject from his mind.

The following, however, through the next day's mail, aroused him still more thoroughly, and threw him into a tempest of passion. The letter bore neither date nor signature, and ran thus:

"If you would save the falling honor of your father's house, return to him at once. Like too many scholars and politicians of his day, engrossed with the phantoms of science, or of Utopian governments, he dreams away his existence, in fancied security here—while designing sharpers over on the alert, are about to rob him of his most priceless jewel."

"Your sister has formed the acquaintance of a low fellow really disreputable in connections, who has palmed himself off on our father, as the descendant of an illustrious house, and is contemplating a matrimonial alliance with him, unless your pride and good sense are prompt to intercede."

"The genealogy of Earl Templeton will be furnished you, on your arrival here. If you are wise, come at once."

"And if I were the most arrant fool in Christendom, I would start within the hour," he exclaimed angrily, springing to his feet; "and God grant that I may not be too late."

His impatience on the route was clearly indicated to his unknown fellow-travelers. The angry frown upon his handsome features seemed to deepen with every mile. On the third evening he landed at N——, and proceeded at once to his father's residence.

Jean Alvarez, seated at his ornate-and-gold writing desk, locked up in a safe from his son's late letter, to find that son in person before him.

"Sebastian!" he faltered, "what—what has happened? Never was I more astonished."

"Heaven knows it is time for me to be here," answered the son, forgetting in the intensity of his emotion, the usual courtesy shown by children of rank toward their parents, "when I learn that my sister is



THE PARTING.

"WHAT IS IT, EARL?" HER LITTLE HAND LAY ON HIS ARM. "YOU HAVE DONE NOTHING THAT RENDERES YOU UNWORTHY!"

on the eve of being married to the greatest imposter in all England."

The father haughtily demanded an explanation of his son's undutiful conduct—and for answer, was handed the letter we have already seen.

"It is all the miserable trick of some jilted queen, or the venom of some disappointed man, as the tenor of this letter would seem to imply, whose relentless enmity this young man has provoked. No, no, Sebastian. I tell you we shall look in vain for Earl Templeton's like again. He is here daily, and the more I see of him the more I am convinced of this."

"Let him explain to us at once then who he is. Let him show us his pedigree," sneered Sebastian, haughtily, "and I will know whether the fellow is to be kicked out by myself or our butler."

"Sebastian, you dare not, you are beside yourself," cried the old man. Mr. Templeton is on the east end lawn with my daughter at this moment. You must promise me to be discreet; must at least treat him with courtesy, until he can satisfy all your scruples as I am sure he will be able to do."

"Then you really know nothing of the fellow whatever!" said Sebastian, with a bitter laugh.

"My own eyes and senses convince me that he is a gentleman," faltered the old man, for the first time feeling some misgiving, lest for once in his life he may have been a little too credulous. "And—and they say he is nearly related to Athol Templeton."

"They say," repeated Sebastian, scornfully. "Come then, my father, you yourself shall see how thoroughly I can command my temper, except when I am in the company of my equals, and shall bear what account this young prince in disguise can give of himself."

"My daughter," interrupted Juan Alvarez, with some perturbation, "we have neglected some little business matters which had best be arranged at once; and your presence can but be a restraint upon us. You will please go in, and we will follow you, I hope, to the entire satisfaction of all parties, in a few moments."

She looked up at him with alarmed ingenuousness, her habit of obedience, and the ominous uneasiness she could not banish, each struggling for supremacy. Another warning look from her father, however, had the desired effect; and only stopped at his side long enough to whisper, "For my sake, dear father, do not let Sebastian be rude, he would never forgive it," she turned quickly and took the walk that led to the house.

Profound silence was observed by the three, until her form had quite disappeared behind the shrubbery, and even then each seemed determined that the other should be the first to speak.

Finally Sebastian, as it became him, began.

"Mr. Templeton, a few days ago the astounding intelligence reached me abroad—intelligence that I would have despised—had not my father's hand written above my father's signature that you were paying me an address to Donna Nina Alvarez with the ultimate intent of marrying with me. I have presented the letter to my father with another haughty smile. "I presume your father has already attested to the correctness of your information."

"Then, Mr. Templeton, I am present to hear what you have to say for yourself." He drew her fondly toward him, he could do otherwise than that, for in any event he knew she was more sinned against than sinned, and pressed his lips to her brow. She released her hand and stood for a moment in silence at her side.

Earl Templeton had recognised the visitor too, and was drawing near with that

stolidious dignity of manner that became him so well. He felt himself unworthy of his betrothed only because he could not give her a full measure of affection; but peer in all else, he had never given her brother a thought in their matrimonial arrangements.

Fresh from the society of titled nobles, Sebastian Alvarez, despite his anger, could not reflect, at this moment, that he had nowhere seen in their midst a finer specimen of manhood than this unknown aspirant for his sister's hand. With the look that he had wished to express only cold disdain, there mingled in spite of himself, a surprised admiration for the singularly striking and impressive face, and stern, pitiless eyes that never seemed to have quailed before mortal gaze.

"Why are you here so much sooner than we expected?" said Nina, hastening to break the embarrassing pause. "And do you not recognise Mr. Templeton?"

"The hero who rescued us from a briny grave? Oh, yes," answered her brother, severely. "I think we thanked Mr. Templeton substantially by placing in his hands some considerable law business for ourselves and our friends. So, before I can take the hand he offers, I trust he will excuse me if I take the liberty of asking him a few pertinent questions in the presence of my father."

"I hope Señor Alvarez will make a nice distinction between pertinent and impertinent forms of interrogation," said Templeton, with a cold smile.

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"No relation?" gasped the Spaniard. "I thought you were of his house, and took your name from him."

"No far you are strangely enough correct," answered Templeton, sadly. "I am of Athol Templeton's household, and bear the same name, but so far as I know I have not one drop of bloodied blood in my veins."

"So far as you know? In God's name who were your parents then?" cried Juan Alvarez again.

"I do not know," replied the young man with a flush upon his proud features.

"I have been assured by one who knew, but the secret died with him, (I allude to the late Carroll Tressilian) that my parents were the victims of a dark conspiracy, and that my father was most foully murdered—my mother being a ward of Athol Templeton, and that she died when I was born. Beyond this I know nothing—absolutely nothing. Once in my burning anxiety to know, I flew to Templeton, and forced my way into the presence of the mad old earl, but I could exert nothing but curses and repressions, and on my return I promised my guardian, Mr. Tressilian, that never on earth would I make the like attempt again. He assured me of one thing however, that the blood in my veins was not one whit less noble than that which flows through the rheumatic limbs of this crabbed old earl, but that I might just as well seek to stay the sun in his course as to find out who I was, while Athol Templeton lived."

"It is a sad story," said Alvarez, after an embarrassing silence of a few moments, "and you will excuse me, Mr. Templeton, for saying so—a story enveloped in a great deal of romantic mystery. I—I am afraid it may not be so fair as you have been led to suppose. My remotest family connections have never allied themselves with people of doubtful nobility. I am afraid we have been a little indiscreet, Mr. Templeton. I am sure Sebastian will have more reason than ever to think so. I know this Earl of Templeton, and you must at least permit me to question him with regard to your birth, are my daughter is allowed to see you again."

"I have neither power nor wish to refuse you permission, though I am confident you will gain no additional information," answered Templeton, mournfully. "But, sir, remember, pray, that I am the accepted lover of your daughter, and have a right at least to explain to her my position before I leave your house to-day. It may be," and for the first time his voice faltered, "it may be some time ere I see her again. I shall be satisfied to speak to her here in your presence."

"I hardly think that necessary, Mr. Templeton, replied Don Alvarez, with increasing coolness. "Nina is an obedient daughter, and I can explain all to her. I assure you that justice shall be done to you, and that you shall hear from us again. My daughter loves you, sir, and I have her happiness to consider. In the meantime you have only to be quiet."

"And to bid you good-evening," said Templeton, rising. "I shall, however, take the liberty of writing to your daughter."

"I had rather you would not," answered Alvarez. "The butler will show you out, Mr. Templeton;" and the young man turned away with a heavy heart. Nina Alvarez had never seemed to him so dear as now, when there was a prospect of her being lost to him forever. Every look and word of hers, so full of the most ardent attachment, yet so eloquent of woman's holiest refinement, came back to him now to bring him heart.

A few stars were already twinkling in the firmament as he came forth, and he looked up at them with a weary earnestness of expression that had in it nothing of the grand strength he had displayed an hour before.

"Oh," he thought wildly, "never had I dreamed that woman could be so dear to me again. Is love destined to prove only a fatal curse to my whole existence?"

"Earle!"

The gate was before him, and against one of its pillars leaned Nina Alvarez. Her face seemed whiter than the dress she wore.

"You are going, and without one word of farewell to me!" The plaintive sadness in her voice smote him to the heart.

"My son's own, it was your father's wish, and in his house I had no alternative but to obey. And, darling, thank Heaven for this one word of parting; only trust me, and I shall yet win my way to your side through an army of opposition."

"What is it, Earle?" Her little jewelled hand lay on his arm. "You have done nothing that renders you unworthy."

"That yours, my darling, has never known one throb of fear or guilt. I could trust you to the world's end and forever."

"You are right, my Nina. It is some quibble about equality of rank. And you will wait patiently until it is settled."

"Until death shall part us."

Wearily the beautiful head had drooped upon his arm. He caught her to his heart, imprinted a kiss that had in it something of holy benediction upon her brow, when, as if unable to trust himself further, he tore himself away, and left her standing alone for the moment, stunned and powerless, gazing after his retreating form.

And as he walked on under the stars, that seemed so far off and cheerless on that desolate winter's evening, those words came back to him like the voice of Fate—

"Until death shall part us."

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[Dec. 27, 1878.]

## CHAPTER XXV.

ATHOL TEMPLETON.

"Then it is rather worse than I imagined," said Sebastian Alvarez, who had listened to his father's account of the recent interview. "The man cannot give the name even of his own father. What need is there of further discussion? We should take him abroad, and drop the disgraceful subject of name and parentage."

"But she loves him, and the old man softly, "and all our efforts have never made her forget him. Sebastian, I cannot wilfully punish my darling child. She is the image of her lost mother, and is far dearer to my heart than all the ambitious hopes of preferment that I could ever cherish in this world. Could you blind her young life forever, without an effort to justify them?"

"I have been taught, sir, that I should dig my grave with my own hands, rather than sign away my honor," said the young man resolutely.

"And I could not have you forget it," replied his father, as he looked with gratified pride upon his handsome and gifted son. "Only, Sebastian, she is a woman, and we must be merciful to her. I have promised the young man, too, that justice shall be done him."

"Nor shall that be forgotten," answered the other, with a look that might have alarmed the old man. "And in the mean-while what course will you pursue?"

"I shall first write to Athol Templeton."

"Letters are uncertain. Why not go to him, or, as you may be needed here, permit me to go?"

"Well thought of," answered Alvarez promptly. "I will give you a letter of introduction, and you shall start to-morrow."

On the following day Sebastian Alvarez left New York at an early hour, and took the rail for the nearest point to "Templeton, the family seat of Athol Templeton, the old Devonshire earl."

He had to pass the night at an inn, but at the earliest moment that could be allowed, he took a hired vehicle and drove over the highway toward the time-honored seat of the Templetons.

"An ancient and stately pile assuredly," muttered the young Spaniard, as its dark galleries and towers rose up above the surrounding forest. "This must have been some old abbey in the days of monachism."

Such in very truth had Templeton been, in those old feral days when even the sword was less mighty than the gown, a grand, old Dominican monastery, of equal renown for the abundance of its revenue and the sanctity of its order, and though in late days the austere Gothic structure, that might have defied decades of centuries from the wear of time, had been unable to withstand the blast of petrochemicals and the devouring tongue of flames remorselessly kindled by the satrapies of Cromwell, whose motto had been "Slay, and spare not," where any reverence for the ancient regime might linger, it had still a stately and solemn beauty, for the Templetons now dead and gone had still left here imperishable records of their princely wealth and royal tastes, and the cunning of master architects had vied with each other to leave here a monument of their art, enduring as holy St. Peter's at Rome, or that old dome in London which has rendered the name of Christopher Wren immortal.

It was a chill, uncertain morning, the sun went in and out, and the shadows seemed to play at hide-and-seek through the aisles of the trees, in whose dense branches the wild fowl still lingered. The pools were frozen over, and the dead leaves had a glistening rustle as Sebastian Alvarez drove through them.

He got out at the keeper's lodge, and followed his guide in silence through the intricate path that still shrouded the grand entrance. A deer sprang up here and there, frightened from its covert, or a gray heron shock its wings preparatory to flight. It was a solitary, royal place, where the first Plantagenet might have basked in the shade of a Fair Rosamond, never fearing that the baskest eyes of the hated Eleanor would follow their retreat, or where the fugitive Stuart might have defied the bullets of the Ironsides.

The boughs of the witch-climbs, tossing to and fro, threw a shadow so dense upon the blanched windows, on the pointed arches, and down the aisles and ivy-covered cloisters, that it almost seemed as if the night still lingered in sympathetic sadness here.

The young man still pressed on, under the dark elm-boughs that lifted themselves now, and revealed to him the antique carvings of old Norman builders, and the deep, heraldic blazons, with the motto of the Templetons stamed upon the glass.

The bell of the courtyard rang out sharply under his touch, and after ten minutes or more of impatient waiting a drowsy porter appeared, and stared in blank amazement at the handsomely-dressed intruder.

"What is your wish, sir?"

"To see Earl Athol Templeton."

"Impossible," said the man. "The heir has not seen a visitor in a twelve-month."

"Then it is time he should be afforded such a diversion," said young Alvarez, composedly. "My father and I are sure the latter would be angry if I were sent out, he continued, handing a gold piece in lieu of further argument to the man. "Come, show me into an aside room, and summon an attendant."

The group of the chamberlans appeared and shook his head still more doubtfully.

"The earl is far from well, and he has seen no one but his physicians for a long time, he protested.

Sebastian tried the effect of another question.

"Is your master ill?" he asked.

"No, sir, not positively ill," was the response. "He has just finished his breakfast, and he is in his favorite before the fire now, but he is never well, and if your business should not be entirely pleasant I might lose my place."

"You will at least take in my card and a brief letter of introduction," said the visitor, in a tone of authority, which went far toward convincing the servant of his importance. "And the earl himself will then decide whether or not he will grant an audience."

The man despaired a moment, took the letter, and went out.

Sebastian Alvarez paced the room impatiently. He began to fancy that he had been forgotten or wilfully hoaxed. He looked at his watch and found that an hour had elapsed. He was about impatiently to ring an inner bell, when the door opened, and the domestic again appeared.

"This way, if you please, sir."

"The earl will then see me?"

"He has so ordered."

The servant preceded him in silence down a long corridor, across a chamber that might have been the audience-place of the Lord Abbot in monastic days, into another ornate chamber, with hangings of faded crimson velvet, brocaded with armorial escutcheons in dead gold, where, before a

## CHAPTER XXVI.

EARL TEMPLETON'S DISMISSAL.

NINA ALVAREZ.

brick fire—the only thing in all the apartment that seemed to have any life about it—sat, in a cushioned chair, Athol Templeton, Earl of Templeton.

The tall figure stood—it was all they had seen—darkened—full palpably upon the high screen of Spanish wine before the sofa's cheer. It shone a wan, unearthly pallor over the little woman face of the little woman and herself, as he lay back across her shoulders, his feet in slippers wrapped in his gold-pield, brocaded and embroidered dressing gown.

The shrunken eyes twinkled, however, with a sharp look of intelligence, and there was a smile among the wrinkles, as he looked apart of the letter in his hand, and then up at the strange visitor before him.

"Do not fear, I beg of you," said Sebastian Alvarez, as he stepped forward with easy grace; "the son of Juan Alvarez may dispense with such an exertion when he stands before the noble Earl Templeton, and darest frown him, for the sake of the position and fortune she will bring him, he is equally determined to retain the other as his cherie amie, and promises to lavish upon her the wealth secured through you. We are ready to convince you that these are no groundless charges. As soon as your daughter shall have sufficiently recovered to be able to have the posts placed before her, we are prepared to do so in a way that she will no longer question. Should she challenge us to do so, address R. S. V. P. —"

"Bob S. N.—"

"I do," cried Nina, springing up with energy. "I have still, as he says, the blood of my fathers in my veins, and I would put him resolutely out of my thoughts could I believe him unworthy. But that is not possible. No, it is not possible."

From the very hour that the above note was shown her, she began to improve.

"We live in the future, since we must so descend, and offer him suitable rewards to furnish you the information he has promised, and then let us leave this accursed country forever," said Sebastian.

"I will, at once," replied his father, in more sadness than anger, "though for my life I can see why any mere stranger should be so bitter against him."

"It is, of course, someone whom he has likewise wronged," answered the son. "At any rate, we have nothing to do with that. Our only aim should be to win Nina from her absurd infatuation. Of necessity he is as dead to her as though he were buried a thousand fathoms in the sea, but that will be a satisfaction to make her scorn to do honor to his memory."

The next day Alvarez wrote a few guarded words to the address furnished, asking for information, and offering a liberal reward to the informant. On the following morning the response came:

"You do me gross injustice in offering me a reward," wrote this unknown correspondent, emphatically. "No money on earth could induce me to the step I am taking, for then I should seem to myself to be bribed. It is a part of a just debt I owe one whose happiness in this life he has forever destroyed. His attentions to Violette Worthington are not so open as of old, but they have a far deeper meaning. Their meetings are now clandestine, and a regular correspondence is maintained. The friends of her brother have warned him in vain. He declares to her that he will give up Miss Alvarez first, but he does not see why she should live either. The world is large enough for a man of means to keep two women whom he loves from any in sullying contact with each other."

The enclosed is a part of a letter addressed by the lover of Miss Alvarez to the chere amie referred to, when she had reproached him with entertaining another love, perhaps stronger than that he had professed for her, and which he emphatically denies. Miss Alvarez can have no doubts in recognizing his peculiar writing."

Then followed a garbled extract from the journal of Earl Templeton, which we have already given. The said extract, however, had been naturally so cleverly altered that Templeton himself, without comparing the two, could not have sworn that it was not his own writing. The reader will recall the similarity of form and dissimilarity of family.

"Be still."

The old man tottered to his feet and stood before him.

"And this Earl Templeton wishes to see the daughter of Juan Alvarez?"

"Yes."

"And your father has sent you to me?"

"Yes."

"Tell him, then, he almost shrieked in voice of terrible passion, "that this brat Earl Templeton is the son of a pet dairy maid, whom my wife once chose to have about her home, and who rendered herself infamous by a life of lawlessness, if not of murder, and that she died just in time to save herself from the worst of earthly punishments for all her misdeeds. Through the whim of that fool Carroll Tressilian, an obstinate fool that he was the child was given the name he now bears, and educated with all the care of a gentleman's son. I have heard that the boy has striking talents, and a most pleasing exterior. So much the worse for him, so much the worse. Such chance gifts of fate were the ruin of Perkin Warbeck, Launcelot Sennel, and a host of other plausible impostors. There, I have given him true history to Juan Alvarez. More than I had ever thought I could repeat to mortal man. Now go, my spouse is coming. 'Or stay, I will ring.'

He took a step forward unaided, reached out his long, bony hand, and seized the bell-wire just within reach.

"I desire too, to be proud of one's possessions, is an instinct natural to the human breast. Nina Alvarez has the 'woman's soul' of the patrician, great wealth and undivided beauty."

"What more could I ask, since cruel fate denied me the fortune with which I might have taken you to my side, and disdained the smiles or frowns of every other woman in the universe?"

Never was there a cleverer imitation of another's writing. Officers in bank would never have questioned the identity of the signature.

Nina Alvarez grew faint and sick.

"Should your daughter still doubt," the correspondent had added in conclusion,

"she may see with her own eyes."

Your son and Miss Alvarez have both seen the girl who has sacrificed her good name for the love of this unprincipled villain. In room number four, second floor, — street, Temple Bar, lives a solitary old woman—a worthy object of charity for the wealthy, who would have starved ere this, but for the unaided support of the writer. A visit to her would be one of charity indeed. If paid this afternoon about eight o'clock, Miss Alvarez would not question the evidences of her own senses."

"Of course that cannot be thought of," said her father. "You must now be satisfied that he is unworthy of another's thought. And to-morrow we leave for Paris."

The girl turned away weeping pitifully.

Sebastian Alvarez followed her with a dark frown upon his face.

"Would you like to put on a disguise,

and go with me to carry arms to this old woman?" he asked.

"Yes; for then I should see with my own eyes."

"And you will promise to leave England without a murmur?"

"Yes."

"Then I will call for you at the appointed hour."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

VIOLETTE WORTHINGTON ALSO VISITS THE "TREASURE HALL" OR —

MISS WORTHINGTON SAT ALONE IN HER CHAMBER IN THE BOARDING-HOUSE AT WHICH HER BROTHER HAD FOUND QUARTERS FOR HERSELF.

"A ghost-like figure after that. The girl stands with her hair thrown back, looking straight out at the person from the window. The girl is pale and tremulous, clutching an angle of the shelf in the light of a single candle.

"Practitioners of boarding-houses are generally very single men without long established professions abroad. They are apt to be a little troublesome—especially if they are pretty about the door of the parlor, ears drawn and lights turned through two thirds of the night, and the front door open all the while. Miss Worthington was by no means a pleasant exception.

Miss Worthington, too, had been raised in an atmosphere of men—as she had heard coolly coolly to boast, and was, as Mrs. Primrose, the landlady, had whispered to her, a "horsey" in her manners. Her laugh was too loud and ringing; her walk was a cross between a swing and a strut; and she was never so well pleased as when galloping at full speed, on the most unmanly of horses, over the country. She had big, bold, sparkling black eyes—a marvellous wealth of hair of a yet tamer hue, regular features, and a superb figure. She had consequently been much admired, and we are afraid, not very discreet, though she still held her position in society.

There was a spirited dash about her which most men admire, even if they do not like to see it in their sisters, wives or daughters; and which, far more than her beauty, drew the man of the world about her.

There was a spirit about her which most men admire, even if they do not like to see it in their sisters, wives or daughters; and which, far more than her beauty, drew the man of the world about her.

In the recklessness of his career some months before, Earl Templeton had seen her and made her acquaintance. His Van dyke face with its strange blending of power and repose had from the first wrought a singular charm over this wayward and impulsive woman. She did not swear to him as many women of her type would have done, that her heart had never been thrilled with a single emotion of love until she met him. There was too much of honest feeling about her yet, for that, but she vowed, with tears in her eyes, and also, with perfect truth, that she had never loved so well, nor ever could again in this world; and, believing, he had marked compensation on her. He found her well-reared, vivacious and enterprising, and knowing himself how much greater infliction other men so circumstanced might have done her, he was perhaps not considerate enough about the opinions of the world; or it may be that he liked Violette Worthington. The sweets of their occasional encounters were not without the gall of her represence, and he had soon told her, with a kindness that had melted all resentment from her heart, that the familiarity of their acquaintance must end. Women are seldom reasoning creatures—never where their affections are concerned—so, men, frères, you who have been similarly treated may imagine the difficulties of the situation.

Miss Worthington had visibly lost spirit.

"No great harm for the matter of that," Mrs. Primrose had averred; "but the young woman makes no effort to hide her attachment for a man who has coolly thrown her aside for another and a wealthy sweethearts."

"And that he had been for her safety, he had given alarum for her safety.

"Perhaps the cause had been removed, for just at the time when report was at its worst, Templeton had begun to visit the great heiress, Nina Alvarez, with the results we have seen, and had, in consequence, almost entirely dropped Miss Worthington. The sweets of their occasional encounters were not without the gall of her represence, and he had soon told her, with a kindness that had melted all resentment from her heart, that the familiarity of their acquaintance must end. Women are seldom reasoning creatures—never where their affections are concerned—so, men, frères, you who have been similarly treated may imagine the difficulties of the situation.

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"Good-bye," she whispered as she stood for a moment just outside the door, and lifted her large eyes, filled with tears, to her brother.

"At last, however, she started up like a frightened hare.

The door of an inner room had opened, and Earl Templeton, seeing a lady, advanced negligently toward her. In an instant his face grew purple with a storm anger.

"I think you were sick," she faltered.

"The servant told me you were here, and you we leave to-morrow."

A great pity took possession of him. He knew how he had once suffered, and he felt assured that this girl loved him.

"You ought not to have come," he said.

"What would your brother say if he were to find you here?"

"It might lead to a difficulty that would involve his life or mine, perhaps both. Come, you must leave at once. Barrycourt must have seen you here. Calm yourself, Violette, I beseech you. I promise you that I will call after tea to bid you good-bye. You must not remain here another instant."

He took her hand and advanced toward the door. He never questioned but that this visit had been entirely impulsive and voluntary on her part—but she that he had sent for had grown alarmed for her safety.

"Good-bye," she whispered as she stood for a moment just outside the door, and lifted her large eyes, filled with tears, to her brother.

"You will come, or my heart must break."&lt;/

## THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

with a swift clinching of the hands. "Can you not see that he is the doubly-damned traitor?"

She only answers with a little piteous cry of horror.

"I could not bear it longer," Donald goes on. "I came back. I skulked from place to place again for the bare chance of looking into your eyes once more. And oh, my darling, last night I lay here like a dog, close to the shadow of the wall, with my eyes riveted on those windows for a sight of you. Oh, blessed fate, you came once; you pressed your face against the glass, and looked up at the stars. Oh, my darling, said then—" She is thinking of Donald! I hugged that thought to my heart with fierce joy."

Nora starts away from him. She struggles passionately to free herself so deftly, the silver chains that he is forcing so deftly,

"Oh, bush!" she cries, pleadingly. "I must not listen to you longer. I tell you, truly, Donald, this must be the last time that we meet."

His happy arms fell from around her. In his first great shock of bitter mortification, he is too proud to plead; too angry to be gentle.

"I tell you I am to be married to Arthur soon; not to-morrow, but next day. Why the wedding-dress is made, the wedding guests are all here. Oh, what if they should come in to see and find you here? You must not stay; every moment is fraught with peril. Oh, Donald, my love, say farewell—last farewell, and go where your friends are discovered."

Douglas laughs aloud. "Discovered! Do you think my life is worth anything to me now? Let them discover me. I am a proscribed rebel with a price set upon his head." Let Arthur give me up, and then claim the reward. A hundred pounds or so would buy you a diamond necklace, my lady. Wear it in remembrance of me in remembrance of your forsaken lover, Donald Fitzgerald."

Nora can not see his face; the light of day has crept slowly out of the earth, and dusky night gathers heavily about them. She cannot see his face, but she catches the furious pain that jars his voice, and makes it rough and most unlovely.

"Oh, no, no, you are cruel, Arthur"—she shivers over the name—"Arthur could not do that; but—but there are other—English officers, our guests; and if they should see you, it would be your death. Oh, do not stop. Go!"

He does not stir—does not answer. There is a sound of footsteps in the hall, through the open windows the happy laughter of the outside world floats in.

"Will you not go?" She shrinks. The footsteps are coming nearer, nearer yet; down the stairs, and through the hall, toward the door.

"Will you not go before it is too late?" With a sudden impulse she flings herself upon his breast, and winds her arms about him. "Oh, go; do not kill me by staying here. For the sake of our past—for the sake of all that I have been to you, go now and escape while you can."

He draws a long breath, and snatches her to his heart for one brief delicious moment. Then as quickly he puts her away.

"Your kisses are not mine," he says, coldly. "Once they were all to have been mine; but they belong to another now. Give me that rose in your hair."

Mechanically she gives it to him. As he takes it, he bends forward and peers into her eyes.

"Are you happy, Nora?" The thought which prompts the question seems to be far away, groping.

"Happy! Do you not see that you are taking my very life away with you? Nevertheless, go go!"

A hand lingers on the knob of the door, without—while with a last, long look at her or at the shadow of her, as she stands beside him, Donald flings up the sash window and disappears in the dusk.

With a low exclamation of thanksgiving, Nora hears his footsteps ring on the flag below; she is too weak to stand; she finds her way, somehow, to a chair close by; she sinks into it, and flinging her arms out across the table, drops her face upon them in a blessed state of half-insensibility.

The remains thus while a servant comes in and lights the great chandeliers, and then goes out again. She remains thus while other footsteps come into the room; they come quickly forward and pause beside her chair.

"Nora! A hand is laid gently on her arm; a man's voice speaks rather hesitatingly. "Nora, are you ill?"

The young girl raises her head with an irritated gesture. The excitement of the last hour has subsided, leaving all her nerves strung to a high, nervous pitch.

"I wish you would not have me about in that disagreeable, prettily way, Arthur," she says, crossly. "If you want to speak to me, speak like a man. I am not sick, I am only tired."

A dark red flush stains the young man's fair face.

"I did not mean to offend you," he answers, humbly. "I only thought you looked very pale—unusually pale."

Nora does not answer, her fair gold-tinted head leans languidly back against the cushions of her chair.

"I came to tell you," Arthur says, still hesitatingly, "that we are to have dancing to-night, in the hall. The officers quite insisted on it; and my father at last gave his consent. But I suppose you will not feel like joining us. You look very ill—and disturbed."

"I certainly do not feel like dancing," she answered, with a shiver. Her quick fancy flies out into the night, and follows a figure hiding in the darkness: a figure flying, whither? entwined, homeless—a price set by fellow-men upon his head. Oh, it was hard! the bitter tears welled up.

"Why do they dance?" she asks, irritably. "Could they not be quiet one night. Could they not leave me even one last evening in peace?"

The blue eyes before her flash quick and cold as steel. But whatever emotion, mardoners and black, is stirred within him, he pushes it resolutely back and answers, still humbly—

"If you wish it, they shall not dance. I will tell them so at once; I will not have you annoyed or disturbed."

The young man kneels beside her and winds his arms fondly about her unwilling form.

"My God, Nora, why do you speak like that? Has not my whole life been given up to a vain idolatry of you; an idolatry that for years, long years, was not rewarded even with one smile. Why do you doubt me now?"

"I have sometimes wondered," she goes on coldly, "how you would take it if—I were not to marry you after all. I have wondered if you would feel it very much if you would care."

His arms fall from about her; he starts to his feet.

"People tell so many strange things," she goes on: "untrue, fancies, lies. I hate a lie. Do you know, Arthur, that when I find a person telling me a lie I have a rush to murder them?"

## MAGGY'S BOUQUET.

BY LETTICE THORPE.

It was a church festival. A gay party of ladies and gentlemen had assembled for the purpose of presenting money to purchase organ, and other things considered equally necessary, and after all the customary devices for increasing their funds had been exhausted, an elegant bouquet was offered for sale, to be bestowed upon the prettiest young lady present, as decided by the gentlemen's votes. The two acknowledged beauties of Mendota toiled with their heads conspicuously, and smiled a delighted approval of the proceedings, each one feeling quite confident that she would be the successful candidate. A young girl stood watching them for several moments, with evident apprehension and amusement, and then a mischievous smile played about her lips and increased the mirth lustre of her eyes. She was by no means beautiful, but had a lively, pleasant face, and abundant health, that finished her cheeks and lips with a color that made all other faces look pale and faded beside hers. Every one liked Maggy Wilson, except indeed those whose jealousy was aroused by her greater popularity. After watching the young ladies before allotted to her, ran up to an elderly lady present, saying,

"Mrs. Nealy, may I take that bouquet round, and get votes?"

"Votes for yourself, Maggy?" inquired the latter, in return.

"Of course, ma'm, that is what I mean to do."

"Well, take it," said the lady, laughing, "and get all you can."

Maggie seized the offered prize, and going back to the two girls, who were now watching her with wondering eyes, she said, in a teasing way:

"Now, girls, you both think that you are going to get this bouquet, but you will not, because I mean to have it myself."

"Indeed!" exclaimed one of them, contemptuously. "I didn't know that you set yourself up for a beauty."

" Didn't you, though? Then it is quite time that you should be informed of the fact."

"It must be of the Dolly Varden sort," sneered the other.

"Now, girls," continued Maggie, laughing, "don't be ill natured. You have won the honors so long, you ought to be willing to step aside just once, and let poor little me have some chance. But I mean to have these flowers, any way. I shall ask every one of the gentlemen to vote for me."

"Well, if I could not get them without begging, I would rather not have them. But I am not as bold as you are."

"No, I suppose not; but you must say good-bye to the bouquet, for I am going to get my votes."

"You will not dare to do it, Maggy Wilson."

"Won't I, though? Just watch, and see; and dancing toward a good-natured looking man standing near, she said:

"Mr. Righty, won't you vote for me?"

"Certainly I will," he cried, laughing pleasantly, "with all my heart. I'll vote ten times for a bonny lass like you."

So, with a triumphant glance at the disengaged beauties, she passed on to some one else. The gentlemen all entered heartily into the spirit of the thing, and Maggie ran gayly here and there with checks and eyes growing brighter every moment.

"Miss Wilson," whispered some one in her ear, "there is a stranger over there; go and get his vote."

"Oh, I am afraid!" she replied; "he looks so serious and dignified."

"Afraid! You afraid! I am sure you need not be."

"I don't care," she said, at last, "I'll do it," and summoning up all her courage, she approached the gentleman referred to, a fine-looking man of perhaps thirty years, and with glowing cheeks and half-deprecating smile, she announced her errand. "Certainly," he replied, "I shall be most happy, and may I give as many votes as I choose?"

"Yes, sir," she said, "but I only asked for one."

"Then you shall have that one, with nineteen added to it," he returned, with an admiring glance at the bright face before him.

"Oh, thank you, I shall be sure of the bouquet now."

"And are you so very fond of flowers?"

"Oh, yes, I love them dearly, but you know, I am doing this for the sake of the fun, to tease the girls with gloomy looks and half-deprecating smile, make bloody marks on the floor; her white dress is darkly stained."

"Donald's blood!" she says, smiling softly as she touches it with her cold fingers, and then places them to her lips.

Shuddering, they draw her away, but on the first stair she stops and knees—

"Step by step, on my knees, I come to you, oh, my love!" she cries, lifting her arms heavenward.

Of course Maggie won the prize and also the attention of all the Mendota beau, who quite neglected the other young ladies, so eager were they to watch the motions of the mischievous girl, who they all declared deserved the bouquet for her merry, winning ways, if not for regular beauty. A few days afterward she received another gift of beautiful flowers, that she suspected at once came from the handsome stranger; a gift that was repeated every few days, although she did not see the expected donor anywhere, or hear anything more about him. But in the meantime, she had become the belle of Mendota most decidedly, much to the displeasure and chagrin of the two more showy beauties who could not understand how "that plain Maggy Wilson had managed to baffle the gentlemen so ridiculously." They knew all about the strange gentleman, and also of his sending the flowers to their adoring rivals, although confined to his room by sickness, which had been the case ever since the festival. They had admired his fine appearance that evening, and had quite resented his utter indifference to their charms, so now they put their naughty heads together and vowed that they would be revenged upon Maggy Wilson, who had taken such malicious pleasure in teasing them, and they would now have some pay at her expense. "She is not going to have it all her own way," exclaimed Ada Merton, the brightest of the two.

"But what are you going to do?" inquired the other.

"I will tell you. We will write some awfully sentimental verses about love and flowers. I can imitate her writing, and he will think, of course, that they come from her."

"But I can't write poetry to save my life."

"No one ever supposed you could, but I can make some silly rhymes, the sillier the better, you know," and so she set to work and concocted some doggerel verses, half sentimental and wholly ridiculous, which she sent at once to the stranger. He was sitting in his room, gazing abstractly out of the window, when the dead man's dust once thrilled him, and a curl of the golden hair fluttered across his lips. Through all the silent watches of the night has the dead man's dust once thrilled him, one summer day, to claim a tree of hair which the wind blew back to him to kiss. Who knows?

So Donald claims Nora in death, and the living lover stands, baffled, looking down upon the united pair. In life he could divide them, but death stepped in and crossed his game.

"I wonder if they are happy?" he says, with a harsh laugh. Then he mutters to himself, as he turns away—

eddy out of the window, when the noise was handed to him. He read its contents with a curling lip, and throwing it contemptuously aside, exclaimed: "She never wrote that, I know, she has too bright, too intelligent a face to be the writer of such contemptible nonsense. Some mischief-maker, some coarse twin, crocheted the seats, fastened them in and varnished them. Now, don't they look nice?"

"They are fine, Jennie," sitting down in one. "Shout, too." Then he drew forth his pocket-book. "Jennie," he said, "we must have *The Post* if it teaches me economy as this, tells you how to make your dresses, and makes an old man like I am laugh like a school boy. We have introduced at once to Maggy, who thanked him in a pretty, blushing way, for the lovely flowers she had received.

"Jennie took her \$3, laid it carefully away, and I am satisfied at the end of next year Mr. Cotton will cease to publish literary papers are humbug."

## ITEMS OF INTEREST.

**No. 258.** An Indiana clergyman is said to have recently delivered his sermon in rhyme.

**No. 259.** A successful farmer, in Kentucky, has been blind since he was eight years old.

**No. 260.** A Pennsylvania grandmother boasts eight twin grandchildren.

**No. 261.** A petrified Indian was recently dug up in Georgia, with a deep cleft in his skull, and a stone hatchet beside him.

**No. 262.** The following question is suggested for a debating society: "Which was first—the egg which produced the first chicken, or the chicken which produced the first egg?"

**No. 263.** A convicted murderer, under sentence of death in Georgia, has sold his body to a medical gentleman for \$10, which he has expended in toilet articles.

**No. 264.** In Harrisburg, recently, a young man was arrested for spitting tobacco juice on the floor of a church, in defiance of the rules posted on the walls.

**No. 265.** Mills and manufacturing establishments which shut down in a hurry at the onset of the panic are now starting up again, and business is everywhere improving.

**No. 266.** A recent advertisement states that competent agents are wanted for the sale of a new medicine, "which will be very profitable to the undertaker."

**No. 267.** A very absent-minded individual being swept from a boat in the river, sank twice before he could remember that he could swim. He fortunately remembered it just before he sank the third and last time. A great invention is memory.

**No. 268.** A nativity notice in a California paper says: "Born—A son, a regular fifteen-pounder, to the wife of Elder Manheim, the eloquent expounder."

**No. 269.** A man died of starvation in the streets of Edinburgh, Scotland, recently, and on removing his clothing, \$250 were found concealed about his person.

**No. 270.** An obituary notice in a late paper contained the touching intelligence that the deceased "accumulated a little money and ten children."

**No. 271.** A Pittsburgh man recently fell fifty feet through a hatchway, with fatal results to several packing-houses beneath, not material injury to himself.

**No. 272.** A young man was struck by lightning near Trenton, N. J., recently, and when the neighbors began to flock to the spot to view the body, they found a man standing beside it trying to sell lightning rods.

**No. 273.** A Maine butcher, while dressing a cow, found in the lower part of the brisket a dark shawl pin nearly three inches in length.

**No. 274.** A Peoria gentleman, who rather suspected some one was peaking through the keyhole of his office door, investigated with a syringe full of pepper sauce, and went home to find his wife had been cutting wood, and a chip had hit her in the eye!

**No. 275.** The Calcutta Englishman, of October 24th, reports as follows: "At American passenger, Mr. Hamlin, attempted to shoot the captain of the steamship *Meinam* while coming up the river on the last voyage from Galle. He was supposed to be suffering from delirium tremens."

**No. 276.** A young lady teacher in one of the Lockport (N. Y.) public schools was assaulted by one of her large boy scholars recently, and so badly handled that she was taken home in an unconscious state. The Union says if the case proves as aggravated as reported, "the boy should be suspended by the neck."

**No. 277.** Petty smuggling from Canada is brisk. A letter from Ogdensburg says that several Watertown ladies were searched at the custom-house recently on coming from Prescott, and had their goods taken away from them. Thirty-three women were searched, and all but four were trying to smuggle something over.

**No. 278.** Things move at a rapid pace in Dubuque. A young man in that city, it is said, recently met a strange girl on a street car. He was struck with her appearance, and his first act of loving devotion was to pay her fare. This noble proof of disinterested affection so touched the susceptible heart of the damsel, that three hours afterward these new acquaintances were husband and wife.



## THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

1874.

1874.

OUR OPENING STORIES  
FOR  
THE NEW YEAR.

## Davy Crockett on the Track;

OR,

## The Cave of the Counterfeitors.

BY FRANK CARROLL.

AUTHOR OF "THE HEAD OF GLENDALE," "JOHN  
PASMORE'S PLOT," ETC.

This captivating story, which has for its hero that far-famed hunter and backwoodsman of Tennessee, Col. Davy Crockett, will be commenced in the Post of Jan. 3, 1874, (No. 23). It is a first-class romance, and one which we are happy to be able to announce for the opening of the New Year. We shall also begin, a short time afterward, a fascinating novelette of English life entitled

## The Ghost of Norman Park.

BY MARY AHERSTONE BIRD;

to be followed by the thrilling romance of Northern and of Tropical life—

## THE SEA OF FIRE;

OR,

## ON THE BRINK OF A PRECIPICE.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

Also, by a new story from the pen of BUN THORNBERY, whose late work, "Jesse Dale, The Conductor's Daughter," now being published in this paper, has excited much interest by its strange plot and striking incidents. His new serial will be entitled

## HARD TIMES;

OR,

## THE REAL VICTIMS OF THE PANIC.

A TALE OF THE WINTER OF 1873-74.

It is scarcely necessary to state to those acquainted with THE POST, that the best stories of Love, Adventure, and High and Low Life, in this country and in England, etc., to be found in any weekly paper, will appear in our columns during the coming year. Our Letters, Miscellaneous Articles, etc., etc., also will be of the highest character.

## CLAUDIA'S TRIUMPH.

BY CLEMENTINE MONTAGU,  
AUTHOR OF "THE COST OF CONQUEST," ETC.

## CHAPTER XL.

HIDDEN TO THE FEAST.

There was a sound of revelry by night, and bright

The lamps shone on fair women and brave men.

—Byron.

Austin Bertram looked querulously up at his friend.

"I do think you are crazy about that affair, Vavasour," he said, peevishly. "Of course, I don't know why you fancy Gibson had any hand in it, and I don't want to. Hunt through the world for him if you will. He was a great scoundrel, I grant, and I wish you joy of him when you find him; but don't torment me by talking of that bygone Westerport affair—the very remembrance of it makes me ill."

"It had a terrible effect on you at the time, Bertram."

"It had, and I hate to think of it. It was so dreadful to be in a house with a man, his guest, and then to have him brought home dead in that awful way. It has seemed to haunt me ever since—when ever I have been at all ill or worried."

"I'll talk of it again more," Frank replied.

"Here's your glass. I hope I hasn't burnt it while I've been talking to you."

"Not you. You are the best cook of that sort of thing I ever came across. You don't worry over it like a woman does."

He drank his gruel, and Frank said no more of Jasper Gibson and the tragedy at Westerport, but he thought continually about it, and the name of the man Gibson haunted him continually. His mind was on the rack from other causes as well, and he grew pale and thin from sheer anxiety and loss of rest.

He had seen Alma since her return to London once. She was driving in the park with her husband, exquisitely dressed, and in a carriage which was the envy of half the fashionable throng in the "Ladies Mile"; but her face was pale and wan, and her eyes all heavy with unshed tears, the weight of hopeless misery she had to bear at home.

He was burning with a mad longing to see her, to rescue her in some way from her wretched imprisonment—for he knew her existence was nothing more—to comfort her somehow, and he daily formed a thousand impracticable schemes to help and cheer her.

Austin Bertram, as he grew better, saw what was passing in his mind, and managed to fan the flame in a hundred ways.

"Have courage and patience," he said, one day, when his friend had been speaking to him of Alma.

"Patience! when I see her dying by inches! For she is dying. No one could look upon her face and not see it."

"Yes, patience. If you do anything rash or indiscreet, you will not only not see her, but make my lord harsher to her than ever."

"It's very well for you to preach," Frank replied, ungraciously; "you don't love her as I do."

"No, thank goodness! therefore, I can look at the master with unprejudiced eyes. I say again, have patience. You shall see her before long."

"But how?"

"Leave it to me."

Frank shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, you may. I'll find a way, see if I do not, as soon as I am able to get out."

"But if you fail?"

"I don't often fail in anything I make up my mind to do, my dear boy. Lord Nortonshall won't draw the rein so tight after a bit, and all those disagreeable matters will find their own level. Rely on me, and you shall see my lady, never fear."

Alma was somewhat disappointed at Brown's note. She had hoped, in spite of herself, for some assistance from him, and she saw plainly by his tone that she might expect none. She showed it to Frank, who shook his head.

"He cannot help me, you see," she said, sadly.

"May he not?"

"I don't think that is it. I think he was willing to assist me if he could. He was very civil and respectful when I spoke to him about it."

"He would not dare be otherwise; but I think 'will not' is the true meaning of this letter. He is too politic to do more than inform you that he had seen what you were so anxious to repress."

"And I will repress them, whatever I do, whatever people say, whatever the cost may be to myself!"

"Have you counted the cost well, dear Claudia?" the young man asked, in a tone that made her heart thrill by its tenderness. "It will cost you much sorrow, maybe, now and afterward."

"It will not matter," she replied, quietly. "I must have them, or I shall feel I have murder on my soul. Oh, Frank, every night I lie down in dread, every morning I awake in terror, lest something should happen to this poor lady. She is in London, they say. Have you seen her?"

"Yes," he replied, in a choking voice, "I have seen her."

"Where?"

"In the park."

"With her husband?"

"With her jailor, rather. Yes, she was with him, looking like a corpse. Claudia, when I think of her, I feel as though my heart would burst—and I am powerless to help her—utterly and entirely powerless."

"But I am not, Frank, and I will do it. My heart is breaking too," she added, under her breath, "but no one minds that—no, not one."

Christmas came, with its warmth of good cheer, and its light, and life, and merriment in the houses of the rich, and its bitter, biting poverty and cold in the homes of those who can hear no angels' songs for the cries of want around them; and Lord Nortonshall issued invitations for a dinner, and evening party to follow.

They were in his wife's name, and the guests assembled, but there was no hostess to receive them. His lordship made every apology.

"Lady Nortonshall had been taken very ill only that day; but she sent her love, and hoped her non-appearance might be no bar to their enjoyment," etc., etc.

All this was delivered with due emphasis, and a proper shade of regret; but there were some present who were not blinded by the intelligence, and among them were Austin Bertram and Lord Wedderburn.

"Very pretty, and very well done," the former said to himself, as he listened to their host's sorrow for his wife's non-appearance; "but I don't believe it in for all that. It is the beginning of the end, I fancy, and the world will see no more of my lady till she leaves the house in her coffin. It's a very pretty game to watch, and extremely interesting to lookers-on."

His surprise was in part correct. Alma was not worse than she had been ever since she came to town. She was simply a prisoner by her husband's express orders.

Early in the day he had visited her in her room, and sternly forbidden her to leave her own apartments during the evening.

"Why, Graham, this is the night of the party," she said, in surprise.

"I do not choose that you shall attend it, Lady Nortonshall," he replied, coldly.

"Why not?"

"That is my business, madam," he said, with an evil look. "Perhaps I am anxious about your delicate health: perhaps—"

"Well?"

"Perhaps I do not care to meet my friends with my faithless wife for their hostess: perhaps—"

"Stop!" she said, in a tone that made him pause; it was so full of suppressed rage. "You have said quite enough, Graham Nortonshall. You lie, and you know it!"

"I do not lie."

"You do."

"Tragedy ails will not serve you, Lady Nortonshall. I would rather believe in the evidences of my own eyes, which saw you in another man's arms, his cheek against yours, his kisses on your lips, than in all the fine speeches and theatrical airs in the world. Remember, madam, you are too ill to be seen. Langham, you will remember me."

"Certainly, my lord," Langham replied, with a smile. "My lady will admit no one."

"Will the actress be here?"

Lady Nortonshall asked the question in a sudden and sharp tone, which made both her husband and his myrmidon start.

"I am not sure who will be here till I see them," he answered, shortly.

"Will the actress be here?"

She repeated the question in the same hard, bitter tone, and he answered her directly this time with a sneering smile on his cruel face.

"Claudia! I hope so—I believe so. I did not fail to send her a card. The party would be sadly incomplete without her lovely face to add to its brightness."

"Coward!" she hissed, between her set teeth, while her face seemed absolutely transformed with rage and despair. "You can be dastardly as well as cruel. You shall not have your way in this instance."

"Indeed!"

"No, you shall not."

"Who is to prevent me?"

"I will."

"How?"

"How? In the way that any outraged wife would do. If that abandoned woman sets foot in this house to-night, I will assert my position as its mistress, and have her turned from the door. Your wife will play the hostess in her own house, and keep it clear of such creatures, even though her husband deems them worthy of the honor of his friendship."

"Have you quite finished?" he asked, with a look of fiendish triumph in his eyes.

"Quite."

"You have no more opinions to offer, nor fine speeches to make?"

"No."

"Then listen to me: you will do nothing so absurd. The house is mine, and no sign of any one having been there was to be seen." Langham was sorely puzzled.

"What could he want? What was he doing there?" she asked herself, over and over again. "It wasn't to see my lady, for he could have got in without any trouble with the key on the outside, and he hasn't been in, I'll swear. It couldn't have been to play the spy on me, surely? If it was, I hope he's gratified with all he's seen and heard of me. I'll find out, or my name's not Martha Langham."

Mr. Bertram smiled to himself at the curiosity depicted on the face of the lady's maid as she walked away.

"I will not."

"You will, to me."

"You will," he replied, in a cold, hard tone, that made her shrink and shiver with his cruelty. "Langham, see that she does so."

"What he held in his hand was only a small thing—a cask of wax—but it bore the impression of the wards of the key with fatal accuracy, and by its means did

"Yes, my lord."

"And then, my virginal indignant lady, I shall take the liberty of turning the key before I go to my guests. I should not like any *contretemps* to mar our pleasant evening."

His wife made no answer this time. She only waved her hand with an impatient gesture, as though she would fain be alone.

It was no use to argue with a man of his cowardly, cruel nature, and she sank into the nearest chair in utter helplessness, while Langham stood looking at her with malignant satisfaction in her face.

He was silent. His wife made no answer this time. She only waved her hand with an impatient gesture, as though she would fain be alone.

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It was as much as she could do to hide the trembling of her lips and keep down the quiver that threatened to choke her voice altogether. She did control them, and the hand that she put up to take the phials was as steady as his lordship's own—sterner, indeed, for the poor was trembling visibly with ill-concealed agitation at her discovery.

He was too quick for her, instantaneous as her movement had been; and with a clever jerk of his wrist he secured the tiny bottles.

"You little wench!" he said, putting his hands behind him, to keep them out of her reach, "how do you know I had them?"

Claudia bent her head over her bracelet to conceal the spasm of disappointment and vexation that, do what she would, she could not keep out of her face. It was growing in moment, and she could look calm at him, and answer:

"Oh, from two or three things."

"Well!"

"Well, first, then, I have but few friends who are interested like you."

"I believe it, darling," he murmured, passionately.

"Well, what else?"

"Secondly, I have only shown the opening of that basket to one or two; and I know the others have not touched them. And, thirdly—"

"What, thirdly?"

"Thirdly, and lastly, as they say in sermons, I know of no one who would dare to take possession of so dangerous an article as one of those bottles contains. Why, my lord, half a dozen drops of one of those liquids would kill as many men."

"Which is it?"

"Ah, you do not know?"

"No."

"You are sure?"

"I have no more idea than the senseless bottles themselves."

"I thought you did not know."

"But you will tell me?"

"Give me the phials, and I will."

"No, you aggravating little charmer, I won't. I'll keep them to tease you, and then you'll live in a perpetual terror of hearing that I've poisoned myself with your Burgis nostrums."

"Such an idea would never enter my head, Lord Nortonshall."

"Indeed."

"Never."

"Why, never? You don't know what your coldness may drive me to do some day."

"Never to self destruction, I am sure. You love yourself far too well to lay your life down lightly. You are the very last man I should ever suspect of attempting suicide, or even thinking of it."

"I don't think I am likely to take my self out of the world in that fashion. Life has plenty of charms for me, and you are the chief. Come, my beauty, what will you give me to get back these precious bottles?"

"Every gift you ever sent me, my lord; all the gems you have lavished on me since you condemned me to say you loved me. I would give them all—nay, all I possess—to have them in my hands once more."

"Not all your diamonds, Claudia—not all your possessions laid down before me now would suffice to unclose my hand, but you can open it with a word."

"Indeed, my lord."

"Yes, with one little sentence. You can give me what you have refused me hitherto: your love."

"You are still trying to win it by gifts, my lord," she said, speaking gayly, though her lips were quite white with the rapid beating of her heart. "You would still buy it by bribery. You will not believe it's not for sale."

"I will give you your phials for one little sentence: some women have not found it hard to say. Kiss me, and say, 'Graham Nortonshall, I love you,' and you shall have them, and my whole life with them, to order as you choose in the future."

Claudia's cheeks flushed, and her eyes glistened as she looked at the man who held so much of life and death in his hands. Her rosy lips parted to reply—who shall say what the answer might have been, where so much was at stake?—when a sharp rap at the door startled them both.

Quick as thought, Lord Nortonshall tossed the phials into the cabinet, and locked the door, before he turned to see who the intruder might be. It was only Brown, who had come to say that his master was wanted, and that mademoiselle's carriage was at the door.

Claudia drew her cloak around her, and held out her hand to her host.

"Will you not return me my property?" she said, with a smile.

"On conditions," he replied.

"Those you named—and none other?"

"None other? Come to me tomorrow, and say what I ask you, and your phials, and all I possess in the world shall be yours."

Brown's answer was quiet. "Good-night," and a gentle shake of the hand as she passed down stairs.

"Twas lucky Brown came in, his lordship soliloquized, as he saw her drive away. "She'd have had them somehow if we hadn't been interrupted. Whatever put into her head to want to pry into that old cabinet to night? I'll keep them at all hazards, and find out which, if I kill all the cats in the neighborhood."

Claudia, on her part, sat in her pretty carriage, with her face covered over her hands, weeping bitterly. How could she be to that man, even for the sake of those precious bottles, and tell him that she loved him? One gleam of comfort she had, and that was the knowledge that he did not know which was the poison and which the harmless draught.

"I must go home and think," she said to herself, "for get them somehow from that man I must."

Two days after Lord Nortonshall's Christmas party, Austin Bertram went abruptly into Frank Vavasour's room. The young man was very pale and hollow-eyed, and was rapidly losing all his strength and spirit. He had been talking of going abroad, but confessed that a secret premonition of coming evil had kept him in England hitherto. Most of his friends advised him, by all means, to go, telling him that England was not all the world, and that there were plenty of places where neither his name nor that of Lord Nortonshall had ever been heard of, and where he would live down the recollection of all he had gone through; but he shook his head.

"I should carry my misery with me," he said to Mr. Bertram. "I should fancy that she was suffering, dying, perhaps, in that brute's power, for he is scarcely human in his wickedness and cruelty to that suffering angel."

Nortonshall thinks he is the wronged party, you know," replied Mr. Bertram, with a shrug of his shoulders; "and that portion of the world to whom he has told his story think so, too. I know better, of course, and I think it will all come right without your running away from it."

Mr. Bertram had reasons of his own for joining in the general advice to Frank

to go abroad. He wanted him just then for purposes of his own, and as the weary days went by, each one seeming longer than the last to his friend in his heart-sickness, he pretended more friendship than ever to the unhappy lover of his other friend's wife.

"Vassour," he said one day, drawing close up to Frank, and putting his hand on his shoulder, "what would you give to me Al—Lady Nortonshall once more?"

"What would I give? All the world if it were mine! You know that well enough. Why do you ask me such a question?"

"Because I can give you your wish, if you choose to gratify it."

"You?"

"Even an—"

"But how?"

"Nay, that's my business till I know whether you will accept my help in the matter."

"Whether I will! Don't you know that I would go through fire and water for a sight of her?" I tell you, Bertram, I would die for five minutes of her company once more."

"You shall have more than that at a much lower price—only the promise of your secrecy. You shall have a full hour of her company if you choose."

"Choose? How can you ask? But when and where?"

"To-night—this evening, that is—in her own apartments."

"But how can such a thing be managed without risk to her?"

"Easily."

"But her husband?"

"Will be out the whole evening. I know that for a fact."

"And that new lady's maid that you spoke of?"

"Miss Langham? Oh, she is an old acquaintance of mine, and I think I can reckon upon her absence. I will take care of her."

"If I could believe you, Bertram?"

"You may."

"You will get me an interview with Alma—with Lady Nortonshall, that is?"

"Oh, call her what you like to me, my boy. Your rhapsodies are safe from repetition from me. Yes, I will get you an interview with her this very evening. I know that you mean no harm."

"Between nine and ten?"

A bitter smile curdled Claudia's pretty lip as she laid down the letter.

"Meant for a stab," she said wearily, "but pointless. Faithless to me! They have overshot the mark there. He cannot be faithless to me—he never loved me! He does love her. Whoever penned that scrawled note is mischief to him and to her—to me, too, perhaps. Can I prevent it, I wonder? I will try. My presence can do no harm, and who knows but I may do some good, I will try. Between nine and ten?"

"And Claudia—what of her if you go away?"

"Oh, Claudia! Poor girl, I have brought no happiness to her; she would be better without me. But, Bertram, you have not told me yet how to get into Lord Nortonshall's house—my darling's prison, for it is nothing else. You would be welcome enough there, but as for me—"

"You think your reception would be the north side o' friendly," as Baillie Nicl Jarvis says?

"I do, indeed."

"I am rather inclined to the same notion myself, so I don't intend to let Nortonshall know anything about it. What the eye does not see, etc. The proverb is somewhat mostly."

"But the servants will see no go in."

"My lord's house has more doors than one," Mr. Bertram replied, with a meaning look.

"I don't intend that we shall pay a visit to the half porter." Once inside I have an "open sesame," in the shape of a key to the corridor in which my lady's apartments are situated."

"You have?"

"How did you get it?"

"Never mind, so I use it in your service. Now, you write a note to my lady—I will take care that she gets it—and tell her you will be there, and then wait with what patience you may for the evening."

"You will go with me?"

"Only so far as to see you into the house, and draw off the dragon which guards the enchanted portal. You surely don't care for a third party at your tender meeting."

"For all the harm I shall say to Lady Nortonshall, or she to me, all the world might be there," Frank Vavasour said, nervously.

"No doubt, no doubt," Mr. Bertram said, "but a third party is always *de trop* at such meetings. Love-passions are very pretty and pleasant in a dust in a trio—they are always out of harmony."

"Who gave you this?" her mistress asked, amazed at receiving it.

"It came by post, my lady."

"By post? Why, there has been no post these two hours. Why was it not sent up to me before?"

"Can't say, I'm sure, your ladyship," was the post reply.

"And there is no stamp on it. You are telling me a falsehood, Langham."

"I didn't mean to," the girl replied. "I never noticed anything about the stamp. I suppose it has been lying among my lord's letters. Anyway, it has not come to me until a few minutes since."

"You are changed, too, Frank—pale, and worn and thin—not a bit like the Frank of the happy days at Westerly."

"Oh! what have we done that we should be separated in the days to come?"

"You are changed, too, Frank—pale, and worn and thin—not a bit like the Frank of the happy days at Westerly."

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served, with delight, "and don't see."

"You're not afraid?" he queried. And she answered, bravely, "N—no, not very."

And so they set off on their first ride.

When they returned Richard was in ecstasies. "Except for a little nervousness, you did splendidly for a first lesson, Miss George," he said patronizingly, "next time you will do better." And Miss George thanked him demurely, with a queer little smile, and ran up to her room, where, singular to relate, she buried her head in the bedclothes and laughed until she cried.

Perhaps, had Mr. Elliot known that she had been a fearless rider ever since her childhood, he would not have been so elated by his success as a teacher. Luckily he did not, and Richard and Miss George were quiet than usual—Richard too full of thankfulness to join in his friend's loud merriment, and Miss George thinking—of what?

"You are a splendid driver," Elliot said enthusiastically as he helped her to alight, thinking the while, with deep mortification, of his morning's lesson. "Where did you learn?"

"A friend of mine taught me at Martindale, two or three years ago," she answered, giving him a keen little glance, and then she ran up stairs to be seated and cried over by Laura, leaving him in a very perplexed state of mind.

Myra, after escaping from Laura's embrace, sat down to think. She had thought herself heartless since Frank Creston's death, and had reluctantly planned out her future life, leaving out entirely the possibility of ever loving any one again.

Such a thought would have seemed like treason to poor Frank; but during the summer, in spite of herself, she had begun to feel a friendly liking for the rough, good-natured young fellow whose mother at first had been her sole object.

Some way, comparing him with Frank, she felt that he was superior in every way, and looking back into the past, she could see many things clearly to which she had once been blind. Frank's death had, in a manner, glorified him to her.

When he was alive she had known that he was unreasonable, wilful, and domineering toward her, and had vaguely felt that he would never make her happy; but when he died she had reproached herself bitterly for all the differences they had ever had and taken all blame to herself. Frank had been all that was noble and generous—it was she who had been in fault; and so she straightforwardly made a saint of the wild young fellow, whose chief occupation while in the flesh had been to make her life miserable with his jealousy and ill temper, and to worry her nearly to death whenever he could find an opportunity.

To day it all came back to her, however, and sitting there alone, she confessed to herself that if Frank could come back to her just as he used to be, she could not marry him—and why? Because she felt that the old love was gone forever, and besides—but we will follow her thoughts no further.

When she came down to tea that night there was a softened, girlish look on her face, which was very charming. A whim had seized her to let her long hair float over her shoulders unconfined, save by a ribbon which held it from her face. She wore a plain white dress, with a knot of mignonette on her breast, and Tom, looking up as she entered the room, forgot his mother's words, and was about to tell her that she had expectations, people were not unwilling to take her at her own valuation.

Ethel Lynn was a paragon. Her father, mother, uncles, aunts, and cousins, had always been accustomed to mention her name with notes of admiration. She was the clever girl of the family, she was the best-regulated, most perfect maiden in existence. Having been a paragon in her own family, Ethel "came out" with a comfortable idea of her own merits, and as she had expectations, people were not unwilling to take her at her own valuation.

Ethel had long been used to give advice, and she could scarcely credit the evidence of her senses when Laurence Esmond pre-sumed to advise her—nay, almost dictate to her—on a question of propriety.

Ethel was at home one evening, bent on comfortable enjoyment, in a cosy armchair, with an interesting book in her hand and a box of chocolate creams at her elbow.

"I'll be civil in the future," she thought, gazing into the bright gaze. "I'll be civil and nothing more. Dorothea always was a reckless girl at Madame Revenache's, and because we struck up a boarding-school friendship there, I know no reason why we should continue it now, particularly as Dorothea is rather fast. Her costume was really *so outre* this afternoon that I wasn't surprised that everybody's notice was attracted by it. Well, I'll not ride out with her again."

The instant the consenting words were spoken she regretted them. A week of unavailing regret and self-torture followed; but her promise had been given, and she was too proud to retreat. Mendenhall had to release her.

She was paler and more silent than usual, but her admiring relatives prepared to welcome the new bridegroom, unconcerned of her anguish.

During this saddest week in Ethel's life, Laurence Esmond never called. It was as well, perhaps, that he did not, for at this time her pride was stronger than her sorrow.

When they did meet it was later, when time and absence had taught her the worth of him whom she had cast away.

The wedding-day had been named—the fifteenth of September. The date was not the middle of August; old Mendenhall and the Lynn's were sojourning at a small town on the coast of New Jersey.

On that morning Mendenhall left his hotel, to take his usual stroll to the small cottage which the Lynns rented. He had just crossed the lawn in front of the hotel when a small boy intercepted him.

"Major Mendenhall, sir?" asked the small boy.

(One Mendenhall had been a major at some distant period of his existence—in 1812, malicious people hinted.)

"I am Major Mendenhall." And he stretched out his hand to receive a yellow envelope, and then gracefully waved the small boy away. The boy went, whistling.

"That post that put on Airs."

The yellow envelope contained a telegram which Mendenhall read, with several undecipherable exclamations.

"Cusine & Co. failed! Curse my luck! I'm in it now!"

He groaned, hit his gouty foot against a stone, and groaned again. Between physical and mental anguish, the skilfully "made up" face of the old bean offered a strange spectacle.

He turned his face from the Lynn cottage, and walked toward the beach.

Down on the beach, under the shadow of a great boulder, sat Ethel Lynn. The sea stretched before her, sparkling and dimpling in the summer sunlight. She did not notice its varying beauty. Her thoughts had flown away.

Since her quarrel with Laurence Esmond, she had known no happy day. These weary, unrestful days had greatly changed her. Her face was sad and pale, but more spirituous and refined. The old expression of self-sufficient confidence had left it.

With the end of her pause she was idly and unconsciously tracing a name in the firm, white sand.

Suddenly a man's shadow came between her and the sun.

She looked up. It was Laurence Esmond. She arose trembling. He started toward her impulsively, and then halted.

"Ethel!"

"Mr. Esmond." She made an attempt at coolness and self-possession.

"It is true, then?"

"What is true?" Ethel asked, with averted face.

"That you are engaged to Mendenhall."

"It is true."

"And will you be his wife?"

"I have promised."

"Ethel, I was wrong—I was mad on that night. He spoke passionately, stretching his hands with involuntary dramatic fervor.

"Forgive me. You can never love this man. You and he will be utterly miserable. Recall the—"

"I will hear no more on the subject. The past is past. I have promised, I repeat, to be Major Mendenhall's wife."

"You never loved me, Ethel Lynn," he said, bitterly, walking away. He turned again as if for one last look, and his eye caught the writing on the sand. His own name was traced there.

"Ethel," he said, with a new tone of joy in his voice. "You love me yet. You made a promise to me once. You must be mine."

"I cannot," she sobbed. "Oh, [Lauren]ce, leave me!—leave me!"

Major Mendenhall stepped from the other side of the boulder.

Strolling along the beach with the words of the terrible telegraphic message on his mind, the sound of the voices had attracted his attention. He halts paused for a moment and distinctly heard the colloquy between the lovers. The cloud of perplexity vanished from his brow. He rubbed his hands excitedly, and with beaming eyes advanced to Ethel, and took her hand.

"Take her, Mr. Esmond," he said, smiling.

She laughed a little nervously when she saw their pale faces. "Were you frightened?" she said, raising up as she met them. "I had a splendid ride, Mr. Elliot, and have given this fiery untamed a less, so he will not soon forget. Thank you, as he gave her the hat, and then tying the

ribbons firmly, she went on with the utmost nonchalance. "One of the wheels is a little damaged—it just grazed the fence in spite of me; but you won't scold, will you?"

"Should?" The look in Richard Elliot's eyes made her blush crimson, although she pretended not to notice it, and then the three went homeward. Tom boisterously joyful, but Richard and Miss George thanked him demurely, with a queer little smile, and ran up to her room, where, singular to relate, she buried her head in the bedclothes and laughed until she cried.

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Ethel was at home one evening, bent on comfortable enjoyment, in a cosy armchair, with an interesting book in her hand and a box of chocolate creams at her elbow.

"I'll be civil in the future," she thought, gazing into the bright gaze. "I'll be civil and nothing more. Dorothea always was a reckless girl at Madame Revenache's, and because we struck up a boarding-school friendship there, I know no reason why we should continue it now, particularly as Dorothea is rather fast. Her costume was really *so outre* this afternoon that I wasn't surprised that everybody's notice was attracted by it. Well, I'll not ride out with her again."

The instant the consenting words were spoken she regretted them. A week of unavailing regret and self-torture followed; but her promise had been given, and she was too proud to retreat. Mendenhall had to release her.

This was a thick double-volume volume, bound in cloth. "Mr. Peterson has edited decided genius as a novelist in this work,"—S. F. Jones and Son.

"One of the strongest elements of re-

lative merit is the narrative of attractive works of fiction issued in this season."

*Evening Bulletin.* "A capital attempt at an American historical novel,"—Boston *Advertiser*.

"The author has added a costly set of

Mr. Lynn's money value increased amazingly, for everybody was aware that the old bean would not throw himself away for nothing, even though his wife should be young and pretty.

Mendenhall had watched his opportunity,

and had thrown himself at Ethel's feet while she was still smarting under the irritation occasioned by Laurence Esmond's well-meant interference. And she madly listened to the sanguine speeches of the ancient exquisite, and from a mixture of motives, defiance and wounded pride being prompted, she promised to be his wife.

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She was paler and more silent than usual, but her admiring relatives prepared to welcome the new bridegroom, unconcerned of her anguish.

During this saddest week in Ethel's life, Laurence Esmond never called. It was as well, perhaps, that he did not, for at this time her pride was stronger than her sorrow.

When they did meet it was later, when time and absence had taught her the worth of him whom she had cast away.

The wedding-day had been named—the fifteenth of September. The date was not the middle of August; old Mendenhall and the Lynn's were sojourning at a small town on the coast of New Jersey.

On that morning Mendenhall left his hotel, to take his usual stroll to the small cottage which the Lynns rented. He had just crossed the lawn in front of the hotel when a small boy intercepted him.

"Major Mendenhall, sir?" asked the small boy.

(One Mendenhall had been a major at some distant period of his existence—in 1812, malicious people hinted.)

"I am Major Mendenhall." And he stretched out his hand to receive a yellow envelope, and then gracefully waved the small boy away. The boy went, whistling.

"That post that put on Airs."

The yellow envelope contained a telegram which Mendenhall read, with several undecipherable exclamations.

"Cusine & Co. failed! Curse my luck! I'm in it now!"

He groaned, hit his gouty foot against a stone, and groaned again. Between physical and mental anguish, the skilfully "made up" face of the old bean offered a strange spectacle.

He turned his face from the Lynn cottage, and walked toward the beach.

Down on the beach, under the shadow of a great boulder, sat Ethel Lynn. The sea stretched before her, sparkling and dimpling in the summer sunlight. She did not notice its varying beauty. Her thoughts had flown away.

Since her quarrel with Laurence Esmond, she had known no happy day. These weary, unrestful days had greatly changed her. Her face was sad and pale, but more spirituous and refined. The old expression of self-sufficient confidence had left it.

With the end of her pause she was idly and unconsciously tracing a name in the firm, white sand.

Suddenly a man's shadow came between her and the sun.

She looked up. It was Laurence Esmond. She arose trembling. He started toward her impulsively, and then halted.

"Ethel!"

"Mr. Esmond." She made an attempt at coolness and self-possession.

"It is true, then?"

"What is true?" Ethel asked, with averted face.

"That you are engaged to Mendenhall."

"It is true."

"And will you be his wife?"

"I have promised."

"Ethel, I was wrong—I was mad on that night. He spoke passionately, stretching his hands with involuntary dramatic fervor.

"Forgive me. You can never love this man. You and he will be utterly miserable. Recall the—"

"I will hear no more on the subject. The past is past. I have promised, I repeat, to be Major Mendenhall's wife."

"You never loved me, Ethel Lynn," he said, bitterly, walking away. He turned again as if for one last look, and his eye caught the writing on the sand. His own name was traced there.

"Ethel," he said, with a new tone of joy in his voice. "You love me yet. You made a promise to me once. You must be mine."

"I cannot," she sobbed. "Oh, [Lauren]ce, leave me!—leave me!"

Major Mendenhall stepped from the other side of the boulder.

## A CHERFUL HEART.

"The world is over as we take it,  
And life, dear child, is what we make it."

Thus spoke a grandmum bent with care,  
To little Bessie, in what we make it."

But Bessie took no heed that day  
Of what she heard her grandmum say.

Years after, when no more a child,  
Her path in life seemed dark and wild,

Back to buy heart the memory came  
Of the joyful utterance of the dame:

"The world, dear child, is as we take it,  
And life, to be sure, is what we make it."

She cleared her brow, and smiling thought,  
"We're over the ground now taught!"

"And half my woes these quickly end,  
The other half may endure,

We move her heart its shadow were;  
She gave a little childhood more;

A little child in love and trust,  
She took the world (as we, too, must)

In happy mood; and in it grew  
Brighter and brighter to her view,

Who made of life (as we, too, should)  
A joy and in it all things were good

And fair to her, as in God's sight,  
When first he said, "Let there be light."

## THE SHOALS LIGHTHOUSE.

## A STORY FOR CHRISTMAS.

BY CHAS. HEBER CLARK.

"Well, Bessie, so the time has come at last."

"No, Tom, not quite yet. This is only the twenty-third, you know. Two more days, then Christmas, and then our wedding."

"Oh, well," replied Tom, "the great event is no sooner, that after our long waiting the two days seem as nothing."

"A great many wonderful things may happen in two days, Tom."

"Yes, but nothing can happen to separate us, Bessie. You are mine and I am yours. Our lives join together now, and no man may part them asunder."

"Oh, I hope and believe there may be nothing to interfere with our happiness," said Bessie. "The sky is very bright for us now, and I cannot conceive of any calamity which could befall us before our wedding."

"Of course not," replied Tom. "Don't think of such a thing. It will be good-bye to you to-day, good-bye to-morrow, and then no more farewells forever, for we shall be man and wife. But maybe I won't be here to-morrow, though, until late in the evening."

"Why?" asked Bessie.

"Because I think I shall go duck-shooting over at the Shoals with Jan Eekels, and it is hardly likely I shall get back before supper time."

"Who is Jan Eekels?" inquired Bessie.

"Why, a young Norwegian, a fisherman who lives on Star Island. He says the gunning around there is splendid now, and he is going to take me over in his boat in the morning."

"Isn't it a little dangerous out on the open sea at this season, Tom?"

"Not a bit when the weather is fine. Jan is a first-rate sailor, and we won't go, you know, if there is danger of a storm. I will be around to-morrow night early, Bessie, for certain."

"I hope so," said Bessie. "But Tom, dear, for fear you shouldn't get back in time, I've had news to give you your Christmas present now. Shall I?"

"You might as well, Bessie. I have yours in my pocket now. Let me exchange to-night."

Bessie bounded out of the room and returned presently with a tiny morocco box. Tom took from his pocket a case, from which he removed a beautiful locket and chain, which he fastened upon Bessie's a faint amethyst ring.

"It's magnificent," exclaimed Tom, holding it at a distance and admiring the stone.

"And I have had an inscription placed inside," said Bessie.

"From Bessie Archer to Thomas Freeborn, Christmas, 186—."

"It is the last thing Bessie Archer will give you, Tom. Before presenting you again, I shall be Bessie Freeborn."

Then the good-nights were said in that sweet old fashion which all true lovers know, and so they parted, each with a soul full of pure happiness in the present, and of tender hope for that brilliant future which seemed so close at hand.

Tom Freeborn, the son of a widow, whose only child he was, and who loved him with such deep affection that she was almost jealous of the fair girl who had come to share his heart, returned to his home and began his preparations for the morrow's expedition. Bessie Archer, the only daughter of a wealthy banker, and a woman whose lovely face was but the outward sign of the purity which crowned her character, retired to rest, to wait amid pleasant dreams the morrow which would bring her nearer to the consummation of her happiness.

The town of Portsmouth, N. H., in which these persons lived, lies close upon a river which flows in tortuous course until a mile or two below the wharves, it empties into the sea. Twelve miles beyond, out in the ocean, lie the isles of Shoals, a group of small islands, some of which are inhabited, one of which happens to be a lighthouse built from its cliffs, and others of which have no signs of man's presence, but are the resort of the wild geese and swans and ducks, of the white owl and the gull, the fal-hawk and the stormy petrel.

From the little settlement upon the rocky hill of Star Island came Jan Eekels on that bright December morning in his open boat, containing two men, as is the fashion in that part with the craft of the fisherman. He belonged to a family of N. w. europeans, many of whom are found upon the islands and upon the mainland in the vicinity, and he handled his little shell of a boat with the dexterity of one who had spent his life upon the water.

Tom was waiting for him at the wharf where he arrived, but as the tide was running swiftly up the channel and was nearly at the flood, Tom determined to wait for it to turn rather than to try to beat down the crowded stream against it. So, when the two sportsmen set out upon their journey, it was after ten o'clock, and two hours more would elapse before they could reach Duck Island, their destination. But the day, though cold, was clear and beau-

tiful, and the wind as it filled the sails and swept the boat over the rough waves gave them no discomfort, for they were warmly and well used to such exposure.

There was special quiet on the island. Freeborn and Eekels sat in a small cove where the surf did not beat, and facing the boat's painter to a rock, they took up their guns and started for the eastern shore. All the afternoon they tramped about over the rugged and broken surface of the pines, sweeping first behind one boulder and then another as they approached the game, until, when the sun approached the horizon, they counted up a goodly number of black ducks and three or four eiders. As they were looking over the trophies of their sport and placing them in the bags, Eekels said—

"We had better hurry, Mr. Freeborn. It looks pretty dark yonder, and I'm afraid we'll have a squall."

"Not much of a one I hope," replied Tom, beginning to move toward the boat. "I don't care to get a wetting such a cold night as this. We should freeze to death."

"We must make good time then," said Eekels, "for it's going to rain, certain, and I'm afraid of a big blow."

They reached the boat, and towsed the game and the fowling-pieces into it, and then, jumping in themselves, Jan hastily raised the sail, and they started toward Portsmouth. The wind blew strongly from the northwest, and the clouds became surging thick and fast overhead, becoming blander and blander every moment, while the surface of the sea was covered with the white-caps, the great waves rolling in mighty masses each moment as the wind grew fiercer.

"I'm afraid we won't make it," said Jan, with a scared look upon his face. "There is a gale before we reach the harbor, and then take care! We'll have trouble, Mr. Freeborn."

"Well, let's drive ahead and do our best," replied Tom, gloomily.

"Look!—look there!—there it comes, sure enough!" shouted Jan. "The squall has got us."

Tom did look, and far out upon the sea he could see that the waves were fearful tumult, while above them a dense white cloud swept forward with terrific velocity.

"The wind then they were blinded by a storm of smoke which dashed from their faces, and while the wind roared about their ears with a shriek such as might have come from the lips of a host of maddened fiends, their boat was tossed about in the angry billows with such violence that it seemed as if it must go to pieces. But Jan clung to the helm, and desperately strove to guide the craft, and he still showed in his face that he had a brave hope of weathering the storm.

He was about to say a cheerful word to Tom, when the handle was wrench'd from his grasp, and as he caught it again, a cry of agonizing despair reached Tom through the noise of the tempest.

"The rudder is gone!" shrieked Jan; "we are lost! we are lost!"

The boat, no longer controlled by the helm, whirled around with her broadsides to the wind, and in an instant there was a crash as both masts were swept over the side, one of them striking Jan's arm in its descent, and wounding him severely. But the staunch little ship did not capsize. She was built for rough work, and she remained upright. Jan sank upon the floor of the hull, and cried like a child. He could do nothing in his crippled condition, even if there was anything to be done. But the waves now and then swept over the boat, and she was gradually filling with water, so Tom, after placing Jan upon one of the thwart-s, went to work to bail the water out as fast as possible. While he was thus busy, a cry from Jan caused him to look up. But the waves had been so high that he could not see his father. He had called the keeper of the lighthouse, and that he was lost, the keeper said, by the name of Bessie.

"I am afraid of a squall," said Bessie. "But Jan, dear, for fear you shouldn't get back in time, I've had news to give you your Christmas present now. Shall I?"

"You might as well, Bessie. I have yours in my pocket now. Let me exchange to-night."

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A DOMESTIC MAN.

IRASCIBLE OLD FATHER.—"Conductor, why didn't you wake me, as I asked you? Here I am miles beyond my station!"

CONDUCTOR.—"I did try, sir, but all I could get you to say was 'All right, Maria,'

get the children their breakfast, and I'll be down in a minute!"

see, and to burial beneath the rolling hill.

And did Thomas Freeborn never come?

Wait.

A great dread filled two hearts in Portsmouth on the night of the storm, hour after hour passed and Tom did not return. Bessie was very hopeful though, for she thought her lover might have returned too late to visit her, and had gone home. But his mother spent the night in agony, fearing the worst, and yet half believing that her boy and his companion had landed upon one of the islands and remained there, rather than to attempt the passage of that night.

In the morning Bessie called early at Mrs. Freeborn's and was greatly alarmed to find that Tom was not at home. Both women then sought Bessie's father for advice, and he instantly dispatched a boat to the islands to discover if Tom and Eekels had spent the night there.

Four or five hours elapsed before the messenger returned; and meantime Bessie and Mrs. Freeborn endured torture, for they were certain Tom would have come back early in the morning, if he had been detained at the Shoals. And when the boatman at last presented himself, he had a sad, sad story to tell. He had talked with the keeper of the lighthouse, who said that a terrible squall struck the islands late yesterday afternoon, and that while he stood upon the rocks of the shore he had seen Jan's boat go flying past in the tempest with mast and rudder gone, with Jan sitting motionless upon the thwart—and with Tom desperately striving to keep the boat from sinking. There could be no doubt, the keeper said, that they were lost. No boat could live in such a sea, and one was a wreck when it reached the shore.

They dashed by at frightful speed, and in a moment the tall shaft of the lighthouse was but a white speck amid the gloom. The air became colder, and the waves hurried upward by the sea in fury still upon them, leaping over the rocks of the shore, and the thick spray which surrounded the light, swarms of birds, passing before the howling storm, were dashed and crushed and dead among the boulders beneath. The wind shrieked and screamed so fearfully about the low hut at the foot of the tower, that the two occupants could scarce hear their own voices even when they spoke in loudest tones.

"It is an awful night, Bessie," said Mr. Archer. "Heaven help any poor sailors who are caught in this neighborhood in such a storm. It will be certain death for them."

Before Bessie could reply a dull thud was heard outside above the roar of the tempest. Then another and another.

"They are signal guns!" exclaimed Mr. Archer, leaping to his feet. "Hark! there they are again! They are firing rapidly and the vessel is evidently close at hand."

The two rushed to the window and looked out. Nothing could be seen but the thick gloom and that ghastly white surface of the restless sea. Again the guns were heard, and then the sound ceased. Bessie and her father sat silently for awhile before the fire, each thinking of the horrors which the morrow's sun might reveal to them, and at last Mr. Archer said:

"She has gone ashore I fear either on Duck Island or on Smutty Nose. It is the latter, I think, or we should not have heard her guns so plainly."

And Bessie clasped her father's hand tightly and thought how poor Tom had braved such a tempest and had gone down into the fathoms depths to which these unfortunate men even now were sinking.

Sleep was impossible on such a night, and Bessie kept watch with her father, who was thus left desolate in the world, the flame of a new affection was kindled between them, and the mother loved the girl because her son had loved her; while Bessie felt that in Tom's mother she could find the only person in the world who could give her fullest compassion and sympathy in her greatest misery.

And so those two became fast friends. Bessie was often at Mrs. Freeborn's home, and as the weeks and months passed away, and no tidings came of poor Tom, all the love faded out of their hearts, and they gave up forever the expectation of seeing him again. But they talked to each other of him, and in the rehearsal of his character, and the recital of the events with which each was familiar in his life, who remained strong consolation in their communion with each other.

A year passed away. Christmas came again, with its solemn memories, and Freeborn gave herself up to frantic grief. The two women, somewhat estranged before, were brought close together by their common sorrow. Both had dearly loved the poor drowned lad, and both were stricken with the same intense and overwhelming anguish. And as Bessie tried to comfort the woman own suffering, to comfort the woman who was thus left desolate in the world, the flame of a new affection was kindled between them, and the mother loved the girl because her son had loved her; while Bessie felt that in Tom's mother she could find the only person in the world who could give her fullest compassion and sympathy in her greatest misery.

Each took a spoon, and while conversing upon some topic remote from the subject that was interesting those who watched them, daintily helped themselves to the为中心的 establishment, the waiter approached to receive their orders.

A three-cent plate of ice cream," said the gentleman quietly.

The waiter stared.

"And spoons for three," added the gentleman.

The waiter grinned in a sort of surprise, but the quiet and almost grave faces of the two gentlemen and the gentleman directed his attention to the waiter, who looked as if he thought a joke was to be played upon him.

He left them, however, and returned with the desired refreshment.

By this time the attention of several other occupants of the place was directed to the three, but they conducted themselves as if entirely oblivious of anything remarkable in their actions.

Each took a spoon, and while conversing upon some topic remote from the subject that was interesting those who watched them, daintily helped themselves to the为中心的 establishment, the waiter approached to receive their orders.

When there was a hearty and laughing return of compliments.

"But were the witnesses there to testify to our success?" asked one of the ladies.



S R T Evening

Post 1874

